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PEFC Certification System Netherlands - PEFC Standard Netherlands

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Content

1	Preface.....	3
2	Introduction	4
3	Scope.....	5
4	Principles and criteria for sustainable forest management.....	5
4.1	Structure	5
4.2	Principles	6
	Principle 1 Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of forest resources and their contribution to global carbon cycles	6
	Principle 2 Maintenance of forest ecosystem health and vitality	7
	Principle 3 Maintenance and encouragement of productive functions of forests (wood and non-wood).....	9
	Principle 4 Maintenance, conservation and appropriate enhancement of biological diversity in forest ecosystems	10
	Principle 5 Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of protective functions in forest management (notably soil and water)	12
	Principle 6 Maintenance of other socio-economic functions and conditions.....	13
5	Guidelines	15
	Guideline 1 Management Plan.....	15
	Guideline 2 Expert opinion	17
6	Appendices	18
	Appendix I Abbreviations	18
	Appendix II Laws and regulations	18
	Appendix III Native tree and shrub species	19

1 Preface

PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes) is a globally accepted system for Certification of sustainable forest management. Through the certification PEFC contributes to the realization of sustainable forest management practices.

In your hands you have the PEFC Standard Netherlands. This standard has been developed by the (Dutch) National PEFC Forum, in which a multitude of stakeholders, with an interest in the Dutch forest, are represented.

Currently less than half of the forest area in the Netherlands has been certified and further expansion of the certified area has halted. In other Western European countries PEFC is frontrunner when it comes to forest certification. This standard has been developed in order to facilitate the expansion of forest certification in the Netherlands by including the option of PEFC certification.

A number of forest owners, particularly small private forest owners, does not (yet) see the need for forest certification. To their opinion it is difficult and expensive and it limits their freedom to manage their forests the way they want it. With the PEFC Standard Netherlands these forest owners are provided with an alternative to have their forest certified. Certification allows forest owners to demonstrate sustainable management and allows them to enter the growing market for sustainably produced forest products as timber and biomass.

The PEFC Standard Netherlands is a compact document and is close to the actual practice in Dutch forestry. The “agreements” in the standard are according to the size of ownership. Besides relying on the Dutch laws and regulations this standard also puts its’ trust in the sustainable approach of the forest owner. The National PEFC Forum’s main objective was to make PEFC certification simpler and ultimately cheaper. In this light it is not useful and not desirable to try to quantify every little issue of forest management. Sustainable forest management can only to an extent be ‘caught’ in numbers but relies more on the attitude of the forest owner.

The PEFC system allows for the possibility of group certification. It holds no limit to the number and size of participating forest owners. This could ultimately lead to one single national group certificate; the most cost effective situation for all Dutch forest owners.

Houten, 18 January 2011

2 Introduction

This standard is based on the criteria for sustainable forest management as adopted by Forest Europe (the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe). Forest Europe has adopted the following definition of sustainable forest management:

‘the stewardship and use of forests and forest lands in a way, and at a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfill, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions, at local, national, and global levels, and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems’

Following the definition, the six pan-European criteria for sustainable forest management are:

1. Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of forest resources and their contribution to global carbon cycles;
2. Maintenance of forest ecosystem health and vitality;
3. Maintenance and encouragement of productive functions of forests (wood and non-wood);
4. Maintenance, conservation and appropriate enhancement of biological diversity in forest ecosystems;
5. Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of protective functions in forest management (notably soil and water); and
6. Maintenance of other socio-economic functions and conditions.

On an operational level these six criteria have been elaborated in the Pan European Operational Level Guidelines (PEOLG)

The Dutch standard is a translation of the PEOLG to the Dutch context for which the following issues played an important role:

- the population density and accordingly the intensive use of forest for leisure;
- the societal need for the development of natural values and spontaneous natural processes;
- a large part of the current forests have been planted on soils degraded by human activity previously, and on which new ecosystem and soils are restoring;
- the degree in which numerous issues are already dealt with in laws and regulations.

Forest owners that manage their forest according to this standard are eligible for PEFC certification.

3 Scope

This document was adopted by the General Assembly of PEFC Netherlands on 24 December 2011.

This standard has been developed for the management of Dutch forests. The standard applies to forests and small woodlots as defined in the 'proposal for the revision of the Forest Act' as proposed by the Forest Authority to the Minister of Agriculture (27-06-2008).

In this proposal forest is:

any surface of more than 10 acres that contains trees, shrubs, coppice and which forms an independent unit, along with rows of trees that consists of more than 21 trees, counted in all rows.

The following elements are outside the scope of PEFC certification:

- small woodlots
- forest on residential area (gardens and courtyards)
- orchards and borders around orchards
- coniferous species, grown for use as Christmas trees, unless over 20 years old
- nurseries

This standards has multiple users:

- Forest owners: this standard contains the criteria and guidelines that forest owners have to comply with in order to obtain a PEFC forest management certificate
- Certification bodies and group managers: this standards contains the criteria against which the forest owners have to be assessed.

4 Principles and criteria for sustainable forest management

4.1 Structure

The standards consists of **principles**, criteria and *norms*.

In total there are six principles as a starting point for sustainable forest management. These principles were developed by Forest Europe (see also "Introduction" and www.foresteurope.org).

The principles have a large and bold typeface and are followed by a short explanation. Following a principle are multiple criteria. The criteria are the operations and measures a forest owner/manager has to execute or avoid in order to manage his forest in a sustainable way. In some cases this is further elaborated in a guideline.

Some criteria have been expanded with a norm. This has an *italic* typeface.

4.2 Principles

Principle 1 Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of forest resources and their contribution to global carbon cycles

Forest management is practiced in a sustainable way and aims on:

- The protection of natural resources like soil and water
- The maintenance of different functions of forests
- The maintenance of the forest area
- The contribution to the carbon cycle

Criterion 1.1

National legislation and other regulations, the forest owner is obliged to obey, shall be followed. In particular the ones mentioned in Appendix II

Criterion 1.2

A management plan according to guideline 1 shall be established. Its contents, in terms of size and depth, shall be appropriate to the size of the FMU.

Criterion 1.3

A management record shall be maintained

- a) *The management record is a yearly report on management activities. It shall consist of at least an overview of performed activities, amounts of harvested and/or sold timber and other forest products, and any deviations from planned activities.*

Criterion 1.4

The forest owner/manager shall maintain the forested area. Products from conversion to other types of land use, without compensation of the forest area elsewhere, cannot be sold as PEFC certified.

Criterion 1.5

The standing stock shall be maintained, in the middle and long term, at a level related to the objectives in the management plan.

Principle 2 Maintenance of forest ecosystem health and vitality

A healthy and vital forest ecosystem is the basis of sustainable forest management. This is taken into account during the planning and practicing of the management. Vitality is related to the diversity in the forest. This is further elaborated in principle 4.

Criterion 2.1

Pesticides, herbicides and biocides shall be used limited under following conditions:

- a) Herbs and grasses shall not be treated with these agents*
- b) Insecticides shall not be used, unless this is necessary for public health issues*
- c) Unwanted wood species (like *Prunus serotina*) can be used with these agents according to the respective terms of use. Small specimens shall be removed manually. Larger specimens can be treated on the stumps.*
- d) Treatment of leafs is only allowed when justified by an external expert opinion (guideline 2), that this method is necessary for an effective treatment.*
- e) The forest owner/manager shall only use agents that have been approved by the Ctgb (www.ctb-wageningen.nl).*

Criterion 2.2

Mineral enrichment is only allowed with an expert opinion (guideline 2) that, based on signs of deficiency, it is demonstrated that the vitality, of species adapted to the site, has decreased due to external factors, and that is necessary to improve vitality of the stand by means of fertilization.

Criterion 2.3

During forest operations, any damage to remaining trees, shrubs and soil shall be prevented as much as possible.

Criterion 2.4

On soils that are sensitive to compression an adequate system of skid tracks and roads shall be present.

- a) The schematic network of tracks can be omitted for technical or ecological reasons or for reasons of soil protection*
- b) Infrastructure should be planned and constructed in a way that minimizes damage to rare and representative ecosystems ('A-lokaties', Forest Reserves and Nature Reserves), and that takes protected species, in particular their migration patterns, into consideration ('Checklist Zorgvuldig Bosbeheer' from 'Gedragscode Zorgvuldig Bosbeheer').*
- c) Forming of deep lanes shall be minimized by means of, for example;*
 - Reducing the number of movements on tracks through optimal planning.*
 - Halting forest operations when weather conditions increase the chance on rutting.*
 - stabilization of the skid tracks by brushwood piling.*

- *Setting the tire pressure according to soil conditions*
- *Utilizing the technical options and properties of the machinery, for example tracks.*
- *Proper drainage of roads*

Principle 3 Maintenance and encouragement of productive functions of forests (wood and non-wood)

The local production of timber secures the supply of the valuable raw material wood with short transport lines.

Criterion 3.1

In accordance with the objectives in the management plan, the forest owner/manager shall aim for the maintenance and encouragement of the production and sales of a wide range of wood and non-wood products and services.

Criterion 3.2

Branches and crowns, being all above the surface parts of the tree less than 8 centimeters in diameter, shall not be harvested. The harvesting of branches and crowns is allowed in amenity plantations, mineral rich soils (not on 'podzolgronden' en 'kalkloze zandgronden'), and for ecological and/or cultural/historical reasons as motivated in the management plan.

Criterion 3.3

Any biomass below the surface shall not be harvested.

Criterion 3.4

Regeneration shall be established with tree species adapted to the site conditions

- a) *Natural regeneration shall be preferred over planting*
- b) *For planting only 'Naktuinbouw' certified planting material in order to identify the origin and guarantee the authenticity.*
- c) *Genetically modified organisms shall not be used.*

Principle 4 Maintenance, conservation and appropriate enhancement of biological diversity in forest ecosystems

The development of stands with diversity in age, (native) species, structure and dead wood contributes to the biodiversity of the forest.

Criterion 4.1

In the certified entity, the proportion of native deciduous tree and shrub species shall be at least 20%, based on crown projection or basal area. When this proportion has not yet been achieved it shall be put as an objective in the management plan with a specified time frame for transition.

Criterion 4.2

In the certified entity, the proportion of mixed stands shall be 50% of total forest area. When this proportion has not yet been achieved it shall be put as an objective in the management plan with a specified time frame for transition.

- a) A stand will be considered as mixed if the proportion of other trees species is at least 20% based on crown projection or basal area.*

Criterion 4.3

On average there shall be 8 dead trees per hectare, standing or fallen, with a diameter of at least 30 centimeters at the thickest end. When this number has not yet been achieved it shall be put as an objective in the management plan with a specified time frame for transition. This criterion is not applicable in situations where:

- a) It could lead to hazardous situation for visitors and/or traffic*
- b) It contradicts with regulations from the forest authority*
- c) It does not match the current development stage of the forest or when there are, for other reasons, insufficient trees of the specified diameter in the forest area.*

Criterion 4.4

Native tree and shrub species that are rare in the certified area or nationally shall be maintained.

Criterion 4.5

In principle, clear cuttings shall not exceed a size of 2 hectares, unless the need and necessity for a larger area have been motivated in the management plan and are justified with an expert opinion (guideline2).

Criterion 4.6

In forest area that have a special status through laws and regulations ('natuurreserveaat', Natura2000, 'Natuurbeschermingswet', 'Natuurschoonwet'), and in 'Bosreservaten' and 'A-lokaties' forest operations shall be performed according to the respective regulations

Criterion 4.7

Hollow trees and nesting trees shall be maintained, unless safety issues prove this impossible.

Criterion 4.8

In the forest livestock feeding shall be omitted. As long as the regeneration of the forest, and with that the sustainable existence, is not jeopardized, extensive grazing is an option, backed with a well documented development stage.

Criterion 4.9

The forest owner/manager shall make efforts in the hunting cooperative to achieve a game stock level at which the regeneration of the forest, in particular the regeneration of native broad leafed trees, can develop in a natural way.

Criterion 4.10

All work and operations in the forest will be conducted according to the 'Gedragscode Zorgvuldig Bosbeheer'.

Criterion 4.11

Within the economical preconditions cooperation shall be given to initiatives for restoring special ecosystems and/or populations of threatened animal and plant species.

Principle 5 Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of protective functions in forest management (notably soil and water)

In the, densely populated, Netherlands the protective function of forests for water quality is very important. Forest management puts effort in maintaining this function and, whenever possible, enhance it.

Criterion 5.1

In stand that are sensitive for erosion the operations are adjusted to this accordingly

Criterion 5.2

Watercourses, wells, brooks and fens are maintained in quality and quantity or restored. Pollution of these elements shall be avoided

Criterion 5.3

The groundwater system is protected or restored, as far as this is within the influence of the forest owner

Criterion 5.4

Soil cultivation, for regeneration purposes, shall be restricted to vegetation and the humus layer as much as possible.

Criterion 5.5

Biodegradable fuels, oils and lubricants shall be used, within technical limitations and if meaningful.

Criterion 5.6

In groundwater protection areas pesticides, herbicides and biocides shall only be used in accordance with the appropriate provincial regulations on groundwater protection areas and water sourcing areas.

Principle 6 Maintenance of other socio-economic functions and conditions

The forest owner shall take his responsibility in respect of society and especially in respect to the people that are working in his forest. The socio-economic functions are assured and promoted.

Criterion 6.1

All personnel of the forest owner/manager working in the forest are familiar with the contents of the standard and work accordingly. They shall be sufficiently qualified and shall have possibilities for appropriate further education. The measures for further education shall be documented.

Criterion 6.2

Forest contractors shall comply with the following conditions:

- The contractor is familiar with the contents of the standard and works accordingly
- Contractors and sub-contractors that exceed € 30.000,- turnover in forest work shall have ErBo certification, or comply with demonstrable equal criteria
- Contractors and sub-contractors that do not exceed € 30.000,- turnover shall be registered at the Forest Authority and work according to the 'Arbocatalogus Bos en Natuur', the 'Algemene Voorwaarden voor Aanneming van Boswerk' and the 'Algemene Voorwaarden voor de Verkoop van Rondhout' of the Forest Authority.

Criterion 6.3

Occupational safety rules and personal protection equipment shall be applied and/or used according to the 'Arbocatalogus Bos en Natuur'. The forest owner/manager is responsible for compliance by its personnel and volunteers.

Criterion 6.4

The relevant collective labor agreement shall be applied (e.g. 'Raam CAO Bos en Natuur' or 'CAO voor de Houthandel'). In case of contracting the forest owner/manager sees to it that the contractor complies with the relevant collective labor agreement.

Criterion 6.5

The forest owner/manager is open to communication with the community and shall explain his management and objectives. The management plan, or a summary, shall be made public upon request.

Criterion 6.6

Relevant knowledge on the forest area, provided by third parties, shall be used for the process of monitoring and evaluation.

Criterion 6.7

Holders of documented ownership or use rights shall be involved in the management planning

Criterion 6.8

The public has access (minimal by foot) to the forest for recreational purposes.

Limitations to the public access are allowed in case of:

- protection of the privacy;
- protection of special plants, animals, habitats and other special elements like archeological monuments
- safety issues;
- resting areas for game.

Criterion 6.9

Locations and elements of special archeological, historical, cultural or spiritual value shall be protected and if necessary restored.

5 Guidelines

Guideline 1 Management Plan

The forest management shall be laid down in a management plan with a 10 year timeframe, including the long term vision. This guidelines lists the minimum requirements of the management plan, the quality of which will be checked by the certification body. The contents, in terms of size and level of detail, are according to size of the certified entity.

The following size classes are identified

- Micro entities smaller than 5 hectares
- Small entities of 5 hectares up to 200 hectares
- Big entities over 200 hectares

Elements of the management plan	Micro*	Small	Big
1. Description of forest entity Description of the current forest with attention to at least:			
a) Sketch of the forest	•	•	•
b) tree species composition	•	•	•
c) standing stock and annual increment <i>(based on growth tables in case of monocultures)</i>	•	•	•
d) vitality <i>(e.g diseases, pests, damage by overgrazing, weather and operations)</i>			•
e) forest structure and mixing proportion		•	•
f) dead wood		•	•
g) ecologisch waardevolle elementen	•	•	•
h) areas that are assigned for the realization of EU, national, provincial or municipal nature objectives.	•	•	•
i) elements of archeological, historical, cultural or spiritual importance.	•	•	•
2. Objectives Description of the management objectives aimed at the maintenance and improvement of the economical, ecological and social functions of the forest. At least the following elements are mentioned			
a) objectives on standing stock and harvest, nature and recreation	•	•	•
b) the aimed forest composition with attention to variety in species, mixing, age distribution and ecosystem structure. <i>(linking to 'Natuurtypen SNL' can be sufficient)</i>		•	•
c) forest products (wood and non-wood)			•
d) standing stock, minimal and maximum harvest		•	•
e) biodiversity enhancement		•	•
f) infrastructure		•	•
3. Management operations Description of the operational measures to achieve the management objectives with attention to			

a) harvest and harvest-planning b) regeneration c) treatment of undesired species/ use of herbicides, pesticides and biocides. d) measures to enhance biodiversity	•	•	• • • •
4. Operational planning A schedule of when and what operations are executed	•	•	•
5. Appendices to the management plan Several maps need to accompany the management plan: a) registration of ownership (e.g. abstract from Kadaster) b) Maps indicating special elements with important ecological, archeological, historical, cultural or spiritual value. c) Maps indicating the presence and boundaries of EU, national, provincial or municipal assigned nature areas d) Maps indicating infrastructure, watercourses, fens and brooks.	• • • •	• • • •	• • • •
6. Monitoring en Evaluation Monitoring is conducted on management plan elements 1 and 3 – Monitoring every 5 years – Monitoring every 10 years - Evaluating and updating management plan every 10 years After catastrophies (storms, fire, disease) evaluation shall be carried out in between.	 • •	 • •	 • •

* forest owners in the micro-class are allowed to briefly write down the management plan.

Guideline 2 Expert opinion

A number of measures within this standard can only be executed when an external expert can confirm the need to take that measure. The external expert has relevant education or experience in the field of forest management. The expert's opinion statement shall contain at least:

1. Name and function of the expert
2. Name of the forest
3. Maps indicating the area for which the statement is made
4. The motivation for considering the measure
5. The motivation for rejecting any alternative measures
6. In case of leaf treatment: a description of the dose and name of the agent used, as well as the timing and way of application.
7. In case of clear cuttings larger than 2 ha: justification of the size of the felling
8. Signature, date and place

6 Appendices

Appendix I Abbreviations

Appendix II Laws and regulations

- Boswet
- Flora- en faunawet
- Natuurbeschermingswet 1998
- Natuurschoonwet 1928
- Wet gewasbeschermingsmiddelen en biociden
- Monumentenwet 1988
- Arbowet
- Wet Milieubeheer
- Wet ruimtelijke ordening
- Wet op de archeologische monumentenzorg
- Provinciale verordeningen inzake waterwingebieden en grondwaterbeschermingsgebieden.

Appendix III Native tree and shrub species

Deciduous trees and shrubs

Scientific name	Rarity*	Scientific name	Rarity*
Acer campestre	rare	Prunus padus	
Acer pseudoplatanus		Prunus spinosa	
Alnus glutinosa		Pyrus pyraster	rare
Alnus incana	rare	Quercus petraea	
Betula pendula		Quercus robur	
Betula pubescens		Quercus x rosacea	
Betula pubescens ssp carpathica	rare	Rhamnus cathartica	
Betula x aurata		Rhamnus frangula	
Carpinus betulus		Salix alba	
Corylus avellana		Salix aurita	
Cornus mas	rare	Salix caprea	
Cornus sanguinea	rare	Salix cinerea	
Crataegus laevigata	rare	Salix fragilis	
Crataegus monogyna		Salix pentandra	
Crataegus x macrocarpa	rare	Salix purpurea	
Crataegus x subsp. cericea	rare	Salix triandra	
Daphne mezereum	rare	Salix viminalis	
Eonymus europaeus		sambucus nigra	
Fagus sylvatica		Sambucus racemosa	
Fraxinus excelsior		Sorbus aucuparia	
Ilex aquifolium		Tilia cordata	rare
Ligustrum vulgare		Tilia platyphyllos	rare
Malus sylvestris	rare	Ulmus glabra	rare
Mespilus germanica	rare	Ulmus laevis	rare
Populus nigra	rare	Ulmus minor	
Populus tremula		Ulmus procera	
Populus x canescens		Viburnum lantana	rare
Prunus avium		Viburnum opulus	

Coniferous trees

Pinus sylvestris	
Juniperus communis	rare
Taxus baccata	rare

After Maes 2006: Inheemse bomen en struiken in Nederland en Vlaanderen. Boom, Amsterdam.

*excluding recently planted forests and amenity plantations